

23 July 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Training

SUBJECT : Public Understanding of the Role of Intelligence

REFERENCE : DDTR Memo #6558, Same Subject

1. We come up short on specific suggestions as to what might be undertaken to educate the public more adequately. I cannot believe that Colonel White is unaware of all of the suggestions which have been made on this subject over the years, i. e., movie pictures, t. v. shows, histories, novels, newspaper articles, and so on ad infinitum. We can offer a few ideas but we don't pretend that these are particularly original and we are aware that they are not directly on target. Nonetheless, here they are:

a. We really don't believe that there is a single "image of the Agency". We suggest, therefore, that we should be as precise as possible about which of various "images" we wish to change. There are some that we wish to leave alone, no doubt, and some that could stand strengthening.

b. We believe that the image of the Agency varies from group to group in the general public and varies within each group. For example, some journalists take a dim view of the Agency while others are at least reasonably restrained and still others are supporters. Similarly, some universities may be assumed to have an adverse opinion of the Agency, but within the student bodies of such universities there are, in all probability, groups which wish us well; groups which consider us an anathema, and groups which are but dimly aware of our very existence. We suggest that our 'targets' be identified as specifically as possible before we try to devise some all-encompassing educational program.

c. Whatever we decide to do, the worse possible approach would be to try to conceal the fact that we are interested in encouraging an accurate public understanding of both our functions and the constraints under which

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we do business. "Candor" is a tough word for us to pronounce sometimes, but we should have learned by now that "half candid" is a mighty poor substitute for "no comment".

d. We asked the distaff side of the Support School, Chamber of Commerce Branch, for some help on the problem, and they came up with what I consider to be a most valuable observation that gets overlooked all too often. They point out that each of us has his own circle of friends who, in turn, have friends, and so on, and that, in essence, each one of us constitutes the "Agency's image" insofar as, perhaps, several dozen people are concerned. The girls go on to remind us that too often Agency employees are left with a handful of air when it comes to talking about their jobs (i. e., the Security admonitions during EOD processing frequently are never countermanded or modified or tamped-down as the years go by, and it isn't much help to tell someone to "use your head" and "observe the need-to-know principle", or some such garbage). I think the girls have a good idea here. It is not only charity that begins at home: those who have to dissimulate should be trained to do so, and those who do not have to should be counseled by supervisors and, when necessary, by specialists from the Office of Security (or wherever). We all need to convey the image of intelligent, rational, human beings rather than bumbling half-wits who constantly hide behind totally transparent half-truths and untruths or retreat into a posture of glassy-eyed silence. ✓

2. We purposely are leaving out of this memo suggestions that we think others will make concerning such things as a Speakers Bureau, careful selection of personnel for external training, special attention to "outsiders" who are invited to address various student groups undergoing internal training, and so on. One last thought has emerged: I know of no organization in the world without some tarnish on its image, so is it possible that we are being too concerned; too introspective, too sensitive? ✓

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[Redacted]
Chief, Support School, OTR

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